

## Maria José Lemos Boavida: Limnologist and Teacher, in memoriam

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Maria José Boavida died on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, 2012, aged 64.

After graduating in Biology at the University of Lisbon, Portugal, she continued her studies at Kent State University (USA). It was at the end of her first year at Kent that, as she was so fond of mentioning, she became fascinated with a paper published by Ramon Margalef in 1951, relative to the production of phosphatases by *Daphnia*. This fascination led to her Master thesis topic and later to her Ph.D. studies and the demonstration that zooplankters were really producing their own phosphatases and not only releasing those ingested with their algal food (Boavida and Heath, 1984; Boavida, 2010). The role played by phosphorus, phosphorus regeneration and zooplankton interactions in lakes were a fundamental part of her scientific research which led to the development of limnology studies in Portugal. She was the national representative of the International Association of Theoretical and Applied Limnology (SIL), and the Portuguese members of SIL profited from her great effort in keeping us up to date with the latest limnology developments, and organising the bureaucratic aspects of SIL membership. Many of us who were her students, thank her the kindness of translating into Portuguese the book *Limnology* by her friend R.G. Wetzel, which was famously used as syllabus in her course of “Limnology” at the University of Lisbon. Her curiosity and scientific knowledge, further developed in cooperation with researchers both at the University of Lisbon and at several research centres throughout the world, granted her the esteem from co-workers and students alike.

As a teacher, Maria José was well known for her care in preparing her classes and advising students, to whom she imparted her interest in the various phenomena shaping the dynamics of lakes. Many

students and colleagues became interested in aquatic ecology through her influence and guidance. This enthusiasm for science required great dedication and discipline from her part, and often others felt she demanded a similar level of attention and dedication from them. Although the demand for scientific honesty and human decency was a requirement in her dealings with students and co-workers, she was generous with those in need of help, and often brought out the best in them. Allying her drive to help and her characteristic fight against scientific inaccuracy, she recently wrote a “Scientific Glossary of Limnology” in a small format so that “students may use it in the field or poster sessions in conferences, where often doubts arise and there is nobody (...) to ask” (Boavida, 2011). Considering her prolific career, it is fitting that her last book can be carried in the pocket as a protection against embarrassment and error.

Maria José was born in 1948 in Mozambique where she spent her youth, and moved to Portugal in 1968. She always spoke fondly of her free upbringing, the wonderful nature of the land and a time when responsibility for the wellbeing of the fellow human and friendship were all important aspects of the human character. Her passing is a great loss for limnology in Portugal, yet, for those who had the privilege to know her personally, it is the loss of a loyal and generous friend.

## REFERENCES

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